

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 13491

EXDIS

DEPT PASS USUN IMMEDIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP ('ARAFAT, YASSIR) UNGA

SUBJECT: RECEPTION OF YASSIR 'ARAFAT

1. SOME TIME AGO I INVITED IMAM MUSA SADR AND HIS INTERPRETER COUSIN HUSSEIN SADR TO LUNCH TODAY (NOV 11) WITH DCM AND MYSELF. DURING COURSE RATHER EXTENSIVE CONVERSATION, IMAM SAID THAT HE HAD LENGTHY DISCUSSION SATURDAY EVENING, NOV 9, WITH YASSIR 'ARAFAT. IMAM BESPOKE STATESMANLIKE SPEECH BY 'ARAFAT AT UNGA AND TOOK THE LINE WE HAD ALREADY HEARD FROM OTHER MODERATES RE 'ARAFAT NOW A RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT LEADER AND NO LONGER REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY CHIEFTAIN. IMAM ALSO RECOMMENDED 'ARAFAT DISCARD DARK GLASSES, KAFFIHEY AND GET A SHAVE. IMAM REPORTED 'ARAFAT DISCUSSED AT LENGTH SECURITY AND PROTOCOL ATTENDANT 'ARAFAT'S ARRIVAL US. IMAM TOLD 'ARAFAT NOT RPT NOT WORRY RE SECURITY FOR THIS WAS IN HANDS OF USG WHICH HAD THE BEST IN THE WORLD. RE PROTOCOL, WHICH IMAM ALLEGED MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TO 'ARAFAT THAN HIS PERSONAL SECURITY, IMAM OBVIOUSLY DID NOT KNOW QUITE WHAT TO SAY FOR HE ASKED US AS TO RANK OF US OFFICIAL THAT WOULD BE GREETING VISITOR. HE ALSO INQUIRED WHETHER SEC GEN WALDHEIM WOULD BE ON HAND UPON 'ARAFAT'S ARRIVAL. DCM AND I CONDUCTED KINDERGARTEN RE PROTOCOL OF ARRIVAL IN US OF PERSONS ATTENDING UN SESSIONS. WE POINTED OUT MATTER WAS PURELY

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BETWEEN VISITOR AND UN AND WERE U.S. OFFICIAL AVAILABLE, THIS
WOULD NOT ONLY SET PRECEDENT IN THIS CASE BUT WOULD ALSO COMPLICATE
US PEACE-SEEKING ROLE.

2. IMAM THEN INQUIRED IF IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR
SOME DISTINGUISHED NON-GOVERNMENTAL AMERICAN SUCH AS
COLLEGE PROFESSOR, ETC, BE ON HAND TO WELCOME 'ARAFAT
TO US. WHILE HE ACCEPTED OUR ARGUMENTATION RE US OFFICIALS
THESE NUANCES NOT RPT
NOT UNDERSTOOD BY 'ARAFAT WHO IS TOTAL NEOPHYTE TO
SOPHISTICATED, PROTOCOLAIRE NUANCES AND WHO
ACCUSTOMED TO ARAB RECEPTION OF BEING WELCOMED IN ONE'S
HOME, ETC. IMAM STRESSED IMPORTANCE 'ARAFAT ATTACHES
TO THIS MATTER AND ADDED HIS OWN VIEW THAT PSYCHOLOGICALLY
AND PRAGMATICALLY ANY COURTESIES THAT COULD BE EXTENDED
WOULD PAY OFF MANY, MANY TIMES TO ADVANTAGE OF USG
IN ARAB EYES.

3. CONVERSATION ENDED WITH MY PROMISING TO REPORT
IMAM'S VIEWS BUT THAT I THOUGHT ONLY UN PERSONNEL WOULD
BE GREETING 'ARAFAT.

3. COMMENT: I CONCUR WITH IMAM'S VIEWS OF IM-
PORTANCE 'ARAFAT ATTACHES TO THIS MATTER. ALTHOUGH
NEWCOMER TO ARAB WORLD, I AM REPEATEDLY IMPRESSED
BY ARAB SENSE OF PROTOCOL AND BROWNIE POINTS THAT
CAN BE MADE AT RELATIVELY SMALL COST IN THIS DOMAIN.
WHILE OVBIOUSLY US GOVERNMENT OFFICAIL COULD NOT RPT
NOT GREET 'ARAFAT, COULD NOT SOMEONE SUCH AS SENATOR
ABOUREZK, SENATOR FULBRIGHT OR CONGRESSMAN KAZEN BE ASKED TO
SHAKE HIS HAND UPON ARRIVAL IN US?
GODLEY

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER MR. TWOHIE, S/S-O,11/11/74.
NOTE: NOT PASSED USUN BY OC/T

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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